

Remarks

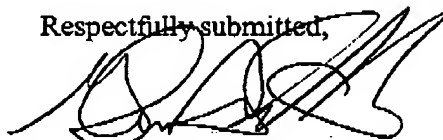
This supplemental amendment is made in response to a telephone communication with Examiner Simon Oh held on December 19, 2003. In the communication, Examiner Oh indicated that this application would be placed in condition for allowance if the limitation "wherein said unitary cap further comprises an integral suture tab" as provided in original claims 3 and 18 was incorporated into each of the independent claims pending in this application.

In the interest of expediting the prosecution of this application, independent claims 1, 12, 24, 28, 32 and 36 have been amended as suggested by the Examiner. Support for these amendments may be found in original claims 3 and 18 and Figs. 4 and 6 of the specification. Claims 4, 5 and 19 have been amended to provide proper dependency. The scope of claims 4, 5 and 19 has not been narrowed by this amendment.

Applicants believe that the subject matter of claims 1, 2, 12-17 and 22-39 as originally filed is patentable and expressly reserve the right to pursue such protection in a separate continuation application.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned to resolve any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,



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